

Board of Trustees
Suffolk County Department of Parks
Recreation and Conservation

Minutes of April 19, 2007 at Deepwells Farm, St. James

BOARD MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Ray Corwin	Chairman, Member at Large
Aurelio Colina	Vice Chairman, Town of Southampton
Miles Borden	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
Gil Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Gregory Dawson	Trustee, Town of Islip
John Fritz	Trustee, Town of Babylon
Scott Hilary	Trustee, Town of Southold
Alexander McKay	Trustee, Town of Huntington
Gary Olsen	Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Todd Stebbins	Member of the Board
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton

ABSENT:

Terrence Pearsall	Member of the Board
Vacant	Trustee, Town of Shelter Island

PARKS DEPARTMENT:

Ronald F. Foley	Commissioner
William Sickles	Senior Parks Superintendent
Tom Hroncich	Marketing Specialist
Nick Gibbons	Senior Environmental Analyst
Ann Rothenberg	Assistant to the Commissioner

GUESTS:

Lauretta Fischer	Principal Environmental Analyst, Planning Department
Janet Longo	Deputy Director, Department of Environment and Energy
Jennifer Kohn	Assistant County Attorney
Barbara LoMoriello	Presiding Officer Lindsay's Office

Chairman Corwin called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 15, 2007

Page 4 – Change to read: “Approved by a vote of 9-0-1”

Page 6 – Change to read: “Town Supervisor Patrick Heaney”

A motion to accept the minutes as amended was made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee Fritz. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 10-0-0.

PRESENTATION BY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND REAL ESTATE

Lauretta Fischer proposed one acquisition:

Carlls River Addition – Soliman/Pizzo Property, Town of Babylon

Acquisition of .09 acres in Wyandanch which is outlined in red on the maps that were distributed. This general area is a tributary to the main Carlls River that flows north/south. It's a low lying freshwater wetland area. We are going to be acquiring this with funds under the Old Drinking Water Protection Program – 12-5-E(1)(a).

A motion to approve the proposed acquisition was made by Trustee Fritz and seconded by Trustee White. Unanimously approved by a vote of 10-0-0. PUBLIC PORTION

Rich Robbins: I am sure you are aware that at the recent Press Conference the County Executive announced the creation of 5 more dog parks in addition to the two here. We are very excited about that and for the legacy this will leave for the people of Suffolk County.

Ginny Munger-Kahn: I am here today to share with you the wonderful news that we have gotten the support of our political leaders to create more off-leash areas in Suffolk County Parks. First and foremost, this issue is about people. It is about building strong communities of people who are dedicated to the parks and the communities in which these off-leash areas are created. I hope you will support County Executive Levy and Legislator Stern's and Cooper's bold initiative to create more such places in Suffolk County Parks.

Barbara Buscareno: We applaud the great efforts everyone has made. Over the last 10 years working on this issue we have learned that size does matter. Having it big enough and properly sited is very important. We don't want it to be close to other activities because we realize there are people who don't like dogs or who are afraid of dogs. It should be in a place that won't be in direct conflict with other park users. We are very interested in the use of Suffolk County parkland and we certainly want to work in concert with your main objectives and also with ours.

Sharon Sacks: I just wanted to say thank you. I appreciate the fact that you have worked really hard to get this through and finally we're going to have 5 new dog parks which is really great for people like me who always seem to be rescuing dogs. The dog parks are really a life saver for not just people that are handicapped, and senior citizens, but for people that are overworked and overstressed and don't want to take antidepressants. The dog parks are our antidepressants.

Chairman Corwin asked for the Commissioner's comments.

Commissioner Foley: As the dog lovers reported, after a successful meeting with the County

Executive he signed onto, with some changes, a piece of legislation (being put forward by Legislator Stern of Huntington) to charge me directly to find additional areas where we could have fenced-in dog runs. Legislator D'Amaro has also been instrumental in getting the larger dog runs and shouldn't be left off the list of those getting credit for making these advances. I would ask the dog lovers, let's not relax here. We've got a lot of work to do. We've got to work out the rules. We've got to get the peer enforcement you've talked about in place at the dog parks we already have, and the ones we're looking at building, so that we can prove to everyone that this whole concept is a success; that people will respect the leash laws where they are and clean up after the dogs where they should. There are opportunities here to make some positive changes not only for the dog owners, but for everyone else that uses the parks and make it more enjoyable for everyone.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Damage from the Recent Storm

Commissioner Foley: We came through some stormy weather the last several days and we are still trying to calculate all the damage. Smith Point, where we finalized the \$4.5 million project to put more sand on the beach, some portion of that got washed away on Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Although there was a loss there, the \$4.5 million did exactly what it was supposed to do – it protected what was there before we put the sand on the beach. Montauk got hit hard. There's a lot of debris on the beach that will have to be cleaned up before camping is allowed. Although we were optimistic last week that we'd be letting outer beach traffic at Smith Point, it's obvious now that's going to be a while. At Shinnecock East the water was very high – some loss, but not dramatic. Cupsogue lost some beach also.

Every plover protection area we had got washed out. We lost snow fencing which we had up to capture sand to help build the dunes. We have a lot of work to do to restore both the bird protection and rebuilding of dune fencing. We also have to watch and wait to see what we get back on the beaches once the water level stabilizes.

Third House

We are having a public meeting on Monday, April 30th, 10:00 AM, hosted by Trustee White at the Montauk Fire House, to give the community an opportunity to discuss the future uses of Third House. Before we allow any public use in the building, we have to get the fire marshal and DPW in there to assess code compliance and that can only be done if they know what the proposed uses are.

Earth Day

Earth Day will be a full blown, Parks Foundation supported day of celebration at Indian Island County Park from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. We encourage you all to be there – bring your family and friends!

Indian Island

Our next Trustees meeting is at Indian Island. There's a project going on there to treat the sewer plant effluent to a level that it's acceptable to use for irrigation on the golf course. That project is nearing the approval and construction phase. The plant superintendent there, Michael Reichel, would like to join us at the next meeting to update everyone on what's going on.

Piping Plovers

Nick Gibbons reported on the Suffolk County Piping Plover Program. A report was distributed to the Trustees describing the "2006 Piping Plover Protection Program". The Parks Department manages a comprehensive Piping Plover and Shorebird Protection Program at 18 parks throughout the county park system. This includes all site monitoring, fencing, protection efforts,

signs and record keeping as well as public education forums. The success of the plover program depends upon site management, public education and the continued work of our piping plover stewards. The plover was listed by the federal government in 1986 under the Endangered Species Act. There are three populations in North America. One is in the Midwest, there's the Great Lakes population, and ours is the Atlantic Coast. There is a federal recovery goal for each endangered species throughout the United States. Our goal is to get productivity of 1.5 fledges per pair.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Financial Disclosure Statements

Chairman Corwin reported that the financial disclosure forms are due in before the next meeting.

Parks Foundation

Chairman Corwin asked Tom Hroncich for an update on the Parks Foundation. Tom Hroncich reported that the position of Parks Foundation Director was approved by Civil Service and he is now the Director. It is a not-for-profit organization. The Foundation is involved with Earth Day and they are looking for sponsors for Third House. We are also working on the St. James General Store's 150th anniversary which is October 6th. On the Foundation Board we would like to see a diversity of geography and background. We have 13 spots on the Board. Jay Miller is Chair and he has been great.

Trap and Skeet Range

Chairman Corwin reported that Johan McConnell, of the South Yaphank Civic Association, provided a set of photographs for documentation related to the Trap and Skeet range. These photos will be available for the Trustees to view after the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

Trustee McKay reported the County and Town of Huntington jointly acquired the Paumonock wetlands property. It has had various names through its history. We would like to get an outdoor educational program going at this site.

Tom Hroncich reported the Maritime Museum now has a new Chairman of the Board, Russ Moran, Sr.

Trustee White reported there was a news item on CBS radio on the Northway, a highway up near Troy. Cell towers are now being installed there because 911 calls were not being answered and people were dying as a result. This is the exact problem we have regarding the cell towers at the GATR site. Our message has to be carried to CEQ. I would like it on the record that the State of New York has recognized that a health and safety issue can out-weigh the alienation of park issue.

Trustee Fritz reported that 3 members of the CEQ resigned.

Lauretta Fischer reported that they have not officially resigned yet. We have not gotten notification yet.

Trustee Stebbins reported one of those members will not be able to resign because their term has expired.

Trustee Fritz asked if we heard from the Army Corp about the pier. The Commissioner responded he was told this morning (by someone who thinks they know) that all the paperwork is done and

waiting to be signed. Nick Gibbons will now have to embark on an annual eel grass survey.

Trustee Colina commented on how impressed he was with the Piping Plover report.

Trustee Cardillo commented on the amount of work that went into Indian Island and it looks very nice.

DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on May 17th, 2007 at 1:00 PM at Indian Island County Park in Riverhead. Lunch will be served at 12:00 noon.

Chairman Corwin announced that anyone interested in seeing the larger dog run should stay.

**The motion to adjourn was made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee Fritz.
Motion approved unanimously by a vote 10-0-0.**

Minutes submitted by Ann Rothenberg.